Be sure to list the existing plants and/or the plants you are planning to grow. You must include the crop code(s) in order to receive lime and fertilizer recommendations. Codes are listed on the back of the information sheet. Code 024 applies to all vegetable garden crops and 026 to all lawn grasses except centipedegrass, which is coded as 022.

■ **Package the sample appropriately.** Put the soil mixture in the sample box. *Do not* tape the box or put soil in a plastic bag. If you are sending several sample boxes through the mail, pack them carefully in a sturdy container. *Do not* send samples in a manila envelope. Mail samples to the Agronomic Division laboratory at the address on the back of this publication.

Receiving the soil test report

Soil samples are usually analyzed within one week of the time they are received. However, from late fall through early spring, processing may take several weeks due to the heavy sample influx from farmers at this time.

When testing is complete, a report is mailed to the client and a copy is posted on the Internet at

http://agronomy.agr.state.nc.us/

A cover sheet and a crop-specific note are sent with the report. The cover sheet explains the technical terms and index values. The note provides extra details on fertilizer application for the kind of plants the client wants to grow.

Information about soil tests and how to interpret them is also available on the internet at

http://www.ncagr.com/agronomi/uyrst/

Consult an agricultural advisor for more help on sampling, interpreting soil test results, and understanding how to implement them.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Agronomic Division
Soil Testing Section

Physical Address: 4300 Reedy Creek Road
(FedEx, UPS) Raleigh, NC 27607-6465

Mailing Address: 1040 Mail Service Center
(U.S. Postal Service) Raleigh, NC 27699-1040

Phone: (919) 733-2655

Web site: **www.ncagr.com/agronomi/**

Agronomic Sampling
Folder No. 1

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revised
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Soil Sampling for Home Lawns & Gardens

The Agronomic Division can analyze soil for its nutrient content and for properties that affect plant growth. Soil testing

- fosters plant growth by providing optimal lime and fertilizer recommendations,
- diagnoses common nutrient deficiencies or toxicities, and
- promotes environmental quality.

When gardeners apply only as much fertilizer as is necessary, nutrient runoff into surface or ground water is minimized, money is saved, and natural resources are conserved.

Taking a good sample

The benefits of a soil test depend on a good sample. The sample should represent the area it is taken from. Otherwise, the results may have little or no value.

A soil sample must be taken at the right time and in the right way. The tools used, the area sampled, the depth and uniformity of the sample, the information provided, and packaging all influence quality of the sample.

■ **Time it right.** Take a soil sample a few months before initiating any new landscaping—whether it be laying sod, starting a vegetable garden, putting in a flower bed, or planting perennials. If the soil test report recommends lime, you will have enough time to apply it and have it adjust the soil pH before you plant.

Sample established areas—lawns, trees, shrubbery, and other perennials—once every